

The Younger Set

By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS,
Author of "The Fighting Chance," Etc.

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Interwoven with this fine, gripping story of a splendid girl and a real man—one of the most charming love stories of recent years—are the author's views of some of the problems of Society. Divorce, gambling, marital unhappiness, are here treated as they enter into the lives of men and women possessed of wealth and social position. If the writer seems harsh in his characterization of the older members of the "smart set," he is tender and hopeful in his views of the incoming generation. In the "younger set," according to him, lies certain hope of regeneration of the wealthy and fashionable world. As he sees those who will sit on the thrones of power, their hands are clean, their hearts are pure, their ideas and aspirations are worthy. When they shall take their mature places in Society's ranks, it will acquire a new tone and a better and worthier view of life and its problems and responsibilities than now prevail.

Chapter 1

"YOU never met Selwyn, did you?"
"No, sir."
"Never heard anything definite about his trouble?" insisted Gerald.

"Oh, yes, sir," replied young Erroll. "I've heard a good deal about it. Everybody has, you know."
"Well, I don't know," retorted Austin Gerard irritably, "what 'everybody' has heard, but I suppose it's the usual garbled version made up of distorted fact and malicious gossip. That's why I sent for you. Sit down."

Gerald Erroll seated himself on the edge of the big, polished table in Austin's private office, one leg swinging, an unlighted cigarette between his lips. Austin Gerard, his late guardian, big, florid, with that peculiar blue eye which seems to characterize hasty temper, stood by the window, tossing up and catching the glittering gold piece—souvenir of the directors' meeting which he had just left.

"What has happened," he said, "is this. Captain Selwyn is back in town—sent up his card to me, but they told him I was attending a directors' meeting. When the meeting was over I found his card and a message scribbled, saying he'd recently landed and was going uptown to call on Nina. She'll keep him there, of course, until I get home, so I shall see him this evening. Now, before you meet him I want you to plainly understand the truth about this unfortunate affair, and that's why I telephoned your glimlet-eyed friend Neergard just now to let you come around here for half an hour."

"In the first place, Captain Selwyn is my brother-in-law—which wouldn't make an atom of difference to me in my judgment of what has happened if he had been at fault. But the facts of the case are these." He held up an impressive forefinger and laid it flat across the large, ruddy palm of the other hand. "First of all, he married a cat! C-a-t. Is that clear, Gerald?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good! What sort of a dance she led him out there in Manila I've heard."



Gerald Erroll seated himself on the edge of the big, polished table.

heard. Never mind that now. What I want to know is how he behaved—with what quiet dignity, steady patience and sweet temper under constant provocation and mortification he conducted himself. Then that fellow Ruthven turned up—and Selwyn is above that sort of suspicion. Besides, his scouts took the field within a week."

He dropped a heavy, highly colored flat on his desk with a bang.
"After that like Selwyn came back to find that Alise had sailed with Jack Ruthven. And what did he do—take

legal measures to free himself, as you or I or anybody with an ounce of temper in 'em would have done? No, he didn't. That infernal Selwyn conscience began to get busy, making him believe that if a woman kicks over the traces it must be because of some occult shortcoming on his part. In some way or other that man persuaded himself of his responsibility for his misbehavior. He knew what it meant if he didn't ask the law to aid him to get rid of her. He knew perfectly well that his silence meant acknowledgment of culpability, that he couldn't remain in the service under such suspicion."

"And now, Gerald," continued Austin, striking his broad palm with extended forefinger and leaning heavily forward, "I'll tell you what sort of a man Philip Selwyn is. He permitted Alise to sue him for absolute divorce, and, to give her every chance to marry Ruthven, he refused to defend the suit. That sort of chivalry is very picturesque, no doubt, but it cost him his career—set him adrift at thirty-five, a man branded as having been divorced from his wife for cause, with no profession left him, no business, not much money—a man in the prime of life and hope and ambition, clean in thought and deed, an upright, just, generous, sensitive man, whose whole career has been blasted because he was too merciful, too generous to throw the blame where it belonged. And it belongs on the shoulders of that Mrs. Jack Ruthven—Alise Ruthven—whose name you may see in the columns of any paper that truckles to the sort of society she figures in. I meant you to understand that Selwyn is every inch a man, and when you have the honor to meet him keep that fact in the back



Nina Gerard.

of your head among the few brains with which Providence has equipped you."

"Thanks," said Gerald, coloring up. He cast his cigarette into the empty fireplace, slid off the edge of the table and picked up his hat. Austin eyed him without particular approval.

"You buy too many clothes," he observed. "That's a new suit, isn't it?"

"Certainly," said Gerald. "I needed it."

"Oh, if you can afford it, all right! How's the nimble Mr. Neergard?"

"Neergard is flourishing. We put through that Rose Valley deal. I tell you what, Austin, I wish you could see your way clear to finance one or two—"

Austin's frown cut him short.
"Oh, all right! You know your own business, of course," said the boy, a little resentfully. "Only as Fane, Fane & Co. have thought it worth while."

"I don't care what Fane-Harmon think," growled Austin, touching a button over his desk. His stenographer entered. He nodded a curt dismissal to Gerald, adding as the boy reached the door:

"Your sister expects you to be on hand tonight, and so do we."

Gerald halted.

"I'd clean forgotten," he began. "I made another—a rather important engagement."

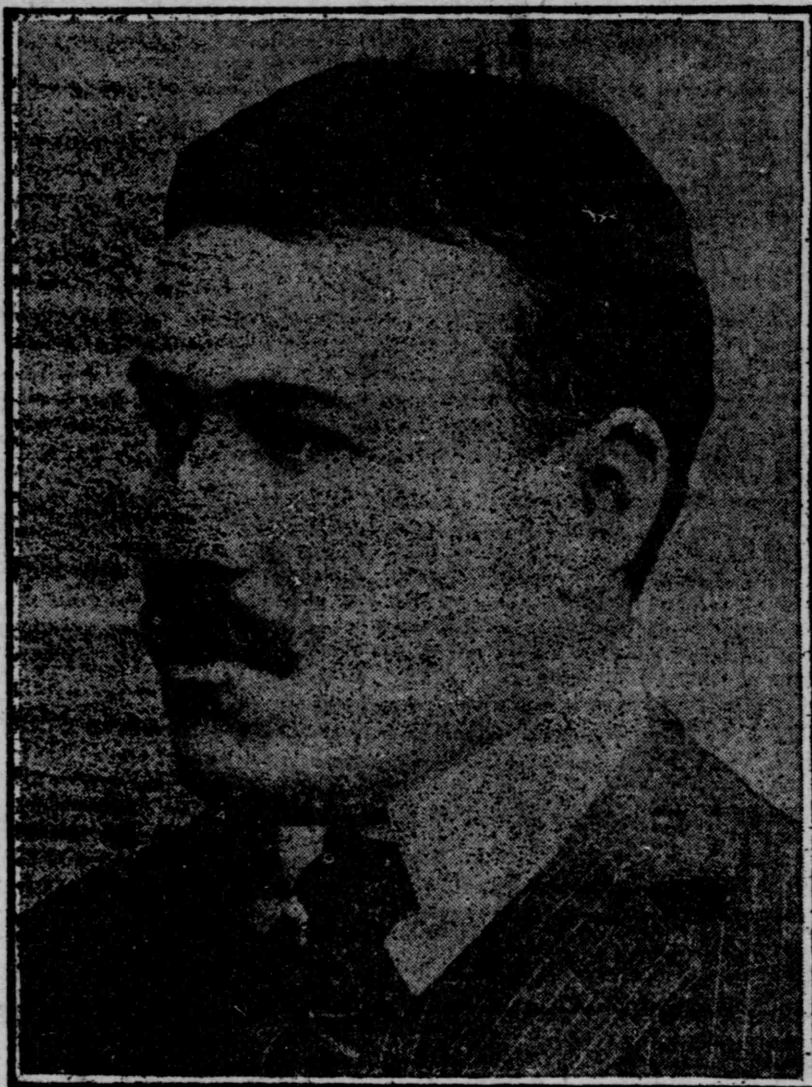
But Austin was not listening—in fact, he had already begun to dictate to his demure stenographer, and Gerald stood a moment, hesitating, then turned on his heel and went away down the resounding marble corridor.

"They never let me alone," he muttered. "They're always at me—following me up as though I were a school-boy. Austin's the worst—never satisfied. What do I care for all these functions—sitting around with the younger set and keeping the cradle of conversation rocking? I won't go to that infernal baby show!"

He entered the elevator and shot down to the great rotunda, still scowling over his grievance, for he had made arrangements to join a card party at Julius Neergard's rooms that night, and he had no intention of foregoing that pleasure just because his

A picture of New York society in which the evils of gambling and divorce are strikingly exposed. With a divorced wife on one side and a beautiful young woman of rare graces on the other, Philip Selwyn, whose conscience forbids the thought of marrying again, by his honorable and self sacrificing course endears himself to every reader.

Illustrations by Ryder, Parker and Henderson



ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

Author of "The Younger Set"

Telling stories is an amazing knack with Robert W. Chambers.—New York Sun.

"The Younger Set," characterized by readers and critics as better than the author's greatest previous success "The Fighting Chance," has been secured for our columns. Illustrations by Ryder, Parker and Henderson.

Not a page that is dull nor a paragraph that anyone can afford to skip.—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

ginner's first grown-up dinner party was fixed for the same date.

Meanwhile Captain Selwyn was sauntering along Fifth avenue under the leafless trees, scanning the houses of the rich and great across the way, and these new houses of the rich and great stared back at him out of a



sauntering along Fifth avenue under the leafless trees, scanning the houses of the rich and great across the way, and these new houses of the rich and great stared back at him out of a

And, strolling at leisure in the pleasant winter weather, he came presently to a street stretching eastward in all the acid impressiveness of very new limestone and plate glass.

Could this be the street where his sister now lived?

As usual when perplexed, he slowly raised his head to his mustache, and his pleasant gray eyes, still slightly bloodshot from the glare of the tropics, narrowed as he inspected this unfamiliar house.

The house was a big, elaborate limestone affair, evidently new. Winter sunshine sparkled on lace hung casement, on glass marquise and the burnished bronze foliations of grille and door. He mounted the doorstep, rang and leisurely examined four stiff box trees flanking the ornate portal, meager vegetation compared to what he had been accustomed to for so many years.

Nobody came. Once or twice he fancied he heard sounds proceeding from inside the house. He rang again and fumbled for his cardcase. Somebody was coming.

The moment that the door opened he

was aware of a distant and curious uproar—faraway echoes of cheering and the faint barking of dogs. These seemed to cease as the man in waiting admitted him, but before he could make an inquiry or produce a card bedlam itself apparently broke loose somewhere in the immediate upper landing—noise in its crudest elemental definition—through which the mortified man at the door strove to make himself heard: "Beg pardon, sir; it's the children broke loose an' runnin' wild-like!"

"The what?"

"Only the children, sir; fox hunting the cat, sir."

His voice was lost in the yelling dis-

The most popular writer in the country has improved upon his own very popular "Fighting Chance"—New York World.

"Steady, there!" exclaimed Selwyn, bringing his walking stick to a brisk bayonet defense. "Steady, men! Prepare to receive infantry—and doggerly, too!" he added, backing away. "No quarter! Remember the Alamo!"

The small boy with the blond hair stepped forward and dragged several dogs from the vicinity of Selwyn's shins.

"This is the Shallowbrook hunt," he explained. "I am master of hounds; my sister Drina, there, is one of the whips. Part of the game is to all fall down together and pretend we've come croppers. You see, don't you?"

"I see," nodded Selwyn. "It's a pretty stiff hunting country, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is. There's wire, you know," volunteered the girl, Drina, rubbing the bruises on her plump shins. "Kit-Ki makes a pretty good fox, only she isn't enough afraid of us to run away very fast. Won't you sit down? Our mother is not at home, but we are."

"Would you really like to have me stay?" asked Selwyn.

"Well," admitted Drina frankly, "of course we can't tell yet how interesting you are because we don't know you. We are trying to be polite—and, in a fierce whisper, turning on the smaller of the boys—Winthrop, take your finger out of your mouth and stop staring at guests! Billy, you make him behave himself."

The blond haired M. F. H. reached for his younger brother. The infant culprit avoided him and sullenly withdrew the sucked finger, but not his fascinated gaze.

"I want to know who he is," he lisped in a loud aside.

"So do I," admitted a tiny maid in stick-out skirts.

"Well," said Selwyn, "as a matter of fact and record, I am a sort of relative of yours, a species of avuncular relation."

"What is that?" asked Drina coldly.

"That," said Selwyn, "means that I'm more or less of an uncle to you. Hope you don't mind. You don't have to entertain me, you know."

"An uncle?" repeated Drina.

"Our uncle?" echoed Billy. "You are not our soldier uncle, are you? You are not our Uncle Philip, are you?"

"It amounts to that," admitted Selwyn.

One by one the other children came forward to greet this promising new uncle whom the younger among them had never before seen and whom Drina, the oldest, had forgotten except as that faded warrior of legendary exploits whose name and fame had become cherished classics of their nursery.

"I infer," observed Selwyn blandly, "that your father and mother are not at home. Perhaps I'd better stop in later."

"But you are going to stay here, aren't you?" exclaimed Drina in dismay. "Don't you expect to tell us stories? Don't you expect to stay here

and live with us and put on your uniform for us and show us your swords and pistols? Don't you?"

"We have waited such a very long time for you to do this," added Billy. "If you'll come up to the nursery we'll have a drag hunt for you," pleaded Drina. "Everybody is out of the house, and we can make as much noise as we please! Will you?"

"Haven't you any governesses or nurses or something?" asked Selwyn, finding himself already on the stairway and still being dragged upward.

"Our governess is away," said Billy triumphantly, "and our nurses can do nothing with us."

"I don't doubt it," murmured Selwyn, "but where are they?"

"Somebody must have locked them in the schoolroom," observed Billy carelessly. "Come on, Uncle Philip. We'll have a first class drag hunt before we unlock the schoolroom and let them out."

Before Selwyn understood precisely what was happening he found himself the center of a circle of madly racing children and dogs.

When there was no more breath left in the children and when the dogs lay about, grinning and lolling, Drina approached him, bland and disheveled.

"That circus," she explained, "was for your entertainment. Now will you please do something for ours?"

"What am I to tell you about—our missionaries in Sulu?" said Selwyn.

"In the first place," began Drina, "you are to lie down flat on the floor and creep about and show us how the Moros wriggle through the grass to boko our sentinels."

"I don't want to get down on the floor," he said feebly. "Is it necessary?"

But they had discovered that he could be bullied, and they had it their own way, and presently Selwyn lay prone upon the nursery floor impersonating a ladron while pleasant shivers chased themselves over Drina, whom he was stalking.

And it was while all were passionately intent upon the pleasing and snakelike progress of their uncle that a young girl in furs, ascending the stairs two at a time, peeped perfunctorily into the nursery as she passed the hallway and halted amazed.

Selwyn, sitting up rumpless and cross-legged on the floor, after having bled Drina to everybody's exquisite satisfaction, looked around at the sud-

den rustle of skirts to catch a glimpse of a vanishing figure, a glimmer of ruddy hair and the white curve of a youthful face half buried in a muff.

Mortified, he got to his feet, glanced out into the hallway and began adjusting his attire.

"No, you don't!" he said mildly. "I decline to perform again. If you want any more wriggling you must accomplish it yourselves. Drina, has your governess—by any unfortunate chance—er—red hair?"

"No," said the child, "and won't you please crawl across the floor and boko me—just once more?"

"Boko me?" insisted Billy. "I haven't been mangled yet!"

"Let Billy assassinate somebody himself. And, by the way, Drina, are there any maids or nurses or servants



Looked around at the rustle of skirts.

In this remarkable house who occasionally wear copper tinted hair and black fox furs?"

"No, Elleen does. Won't you please wriggle?"

"Who is Elleen?"

"Elleen? Why—don't you know who Elleen is?"

"No, I don't," began Captain Selwyn, when a delighted shout from the children swung him toward the door again. His sister, Mrs. Gerard, stood there in carriage gown and sables, radiant with surprise.

"Phil! You! Exactly like you, Philip, to come strolling in from the antipodes—dear fellow!" recovering from the fraternal embrace and holding both lapels of his coat in her gloved hands. "Six years!" she said again and again, tenderly reproachful. "Alexanderine was a baby of six—Drina, child, do you remember my brother—do you remember your Uncle Philip? She doesn't remember. You can't expect her to recollect. She is only twelve, Phil!"

"I remember one thing," observed Drina serenely.

Brother and sister turned toward her in pride and delight, and the child went on: "My Aunt Alise; I remember her. She was so pretty; I concluded Drina, nodding thoughtfully in the effort to remember more. "Uncle Philip, where is she now?"

But her uncle seemed to have lost his voice as well as his color, and Mrs. Gerard's gloved fingers tightened on the lapels of his coat.

"I never dreamed," she began—"the child has never spoken of—of her from that time to this! I never dreamed she could remember!"

"I don't understand what you are talking about, mother," said Drina, but her pretty mother caught her by the shoulders, striving to speak lightly. "Where in the world is Bridget, child? Where is Katie? And what is all this I hear from Dawson? It can't be possible that you have been fox hunting all over the house again! Your nurses know perfectly well that you are not to hunt anywhere except in your own nursery. Such a household, Phil! Everybody incompetent, including me; everything topsy turvy, and all five dogs perfectly possessed to lie on that pink rug in the music room. Have they been there today, Drina, while you were practicing?"

"Yes, and there are some new spots, mother. I'm very sorry."

"Take the children away!" said Mrs. Gerard to the nurses. She bent over, kissing each culprit as she filed passed out. "What do you think of them? You never before saw the three youngsters. You saw Drina when you went east, and Billy was a few months old. What do you think of them? Honestly, Phil."

"All to the good, Ninette; very ornamental. Drina and that Josephine kid are real beauties. I—er—take to Billy tremendously. He told me that he'd locked up his nurses. I ought to have interfered. It was really my fault, you see."

"And you didn't make him let them out? You are not going to be very good morally for my young. Tell me, Phil, have you seen Austin?"

"I went to the trust company, but he was attending a directors' confab. How is he? He's prosperous anyhow, I observe," with a humorous glance around the elaborate hallway which they were traversing.

"Don't dare laugh at us!" smiled his sister. "I wish we were back in Tenth street. But so many children came—Billy, Josephine, Winthrop and Tina—and the Tenth street house wasn't half big enough, and a dreadful speculative builder built this house and persuaded Austin to buy it. You're going to stay here?"

"No; I'm at the Holland."

"Of course you're to live with us. You've resigned from the service, haven't you?"

He looked at her sharply, but did not reply.

A curious flash of telepathy passed between them. She hesitated; then: "You once promised Austin and me that you would stay with us."

"But Nina—"

(To be continued.)